

TO: State Directors
Rural Development

FROM: Thomas C. Dorr (*signed by Thomas C. Dorr*)
Under Secretary
USDA Rural Development

SUBJECT: Use of 2000 Census Data for Eligibility Purposes

PURPOSE/INTENDED OUTCOME:

Rural Development is already using 2000 Census data for rural population eligibility determinations. This Administrative Notice (AN) clarifies when the 2000 Census data should be utilized in regard to median household income (MHI) data. This data will be used to determine an applicant's eligibility and loan priority for direct loan, loan guarantee, and grant programs provided through the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS), the Rural Housing Service (RHS), and the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) as authorized in the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS AN:

This AN replaces and updates AN No. 3679 dated September 27, 2001, which expired on September 30, 2002, and dealt only with use of 2000 Census data when determining population eligibility.

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES:

States are already required to utilize the 2000 Census data for rural population eligibility determinations. City and town population data is available on the Internet at <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>.

The Census 2000 MHI data was recently received by the National Office program officials from the Census Bureau. In order to implement the new MHI nationwide, this guidance is being provided to ensure the most equitable nationwide implementation with as little negative impact on our customers as possible.

EXPIRATION DATE:
September 30, 2004

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Preceding RD Instruction 1940-L

MHI must be based on the 2000 Census data for all applications received on or after October 1, 2003. The 2000 census data must also be used for all applications on hand as of October 1, 2003, where a written eligibility determination has not been made. The Census 2000 MHI information is available on the Internet at <http://199.159.140.1/census/>.

For all applications on hand as of October 1, 2003, where the applicant has been determined in writing to be eligible and such determination has been communicated to the applicant, the 1990 Census MHI data may be used, provided that the applications are obligated prior to October 1, 2004. If an application cannot be obligated by October 1, 2004, concurrence must be obtained from the appropriate Agency's Administrator to continue with the processing utilizing 1990 Census data.

A list of the applications on hand as of October 1, 2003, must be prepared by each State Office and placed in the docket for each application impacted by the 2000 Census implementation of the MHI. This list should include each applicant's name, project name if applicable, location (county), requested amount broken down by loan and grant, the census data used (1990 or 2000), and whether an eligibility determination has been made.

An exception to the guidance provided in the preceding paragraph pertains to the Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants (ECWAG) administered by the Water and Environmental Programs. The 2000 Census non-metro MHI figures are effective immediately when determining eligibility for an ECWAG.

States should use the MHI and per capita income data provided by the 2000 Census if there is no data for non-metro MHI or non-metro per capita income according to the 2000 Census in areas which are eligible for Rural Development financial assistance.

For the RHS Single Family Housing and Multi-Family Housing programs, the HUD Income Limit tables in the 3550 handbooks will be used.

SUMMARY:

Usage of 2000 Census data when determining population and income eligibility ensures that program funds are utilized in accordance with program statutes. Pending applications that would not qualify if 2000 Census data is used may be processed using 1990 Census data provided a written determination of eligibility for MHI purposes exists as of October 1, 2003.

State Offices having questions on the use of 2000 Census data should contact the applicable program personnel in the National Office as listed below:

Agency	Program	Contact	Phone No.	Email Address
RBS	Business Programs	Sylvia Neal	202-720-2811	sylvia.neal@usda.gov
RHS	Community Programs	Chad Parker	202-720-1502	chad.parker@usda.gov
"	Multi-Family Housing	Sue Harris-Green	202-720-1660	susie.harris@usda.gov
"	Single Family Housing – Direct – Guaranteed	Michael Feinberg Dean Daetwyler	202-720-3214 202-690-0514	michael.feinberg@usda.gov dean.daetwyler@usda.gov
RUS	Water and Environmental Programs	Linda Scott	202-720-9639	linda.scott@usda.gov